

THE CULTURE

MINDS

A JUMPCHAIN
CYOA

The Culture. Maybe you've heard of them? That anarchic, liberal pacifist do-gooder collective of pan-humans who somehow found themselves near the top of the galactic societal ladder, largely thanks to their Minds – the vasty, numinous machines with intellects so far beyond those of humans that one can barely describe it.

However, The Culture is not the only civilization in the galaxy – one of millions - and The Culture's Minds, too, have their brethren and opponents.

This jump focuses on the scale that the Minds, Ships, and other machine intelligences of the galaxy operate on. Their incredible hardware is capable of simulating whole universes in meticulous detail and tapping into the limitless energy of the hypergrid...and sometimes screwing up just as much as their far less-cognitively-enhanced biologicals.

Well, you know what they say: With great computational matrices comes a lot of really-involved simming.

Please accept these +1000 Culture Points for your use; I assure you they aren't ours, we got rid of that forced-rationing token stuff ages ago.

You may insert at any point from 1327 CE (the Idiran-Culture war's outset) to 2875 CE (the end of the War in Heaven). You may insert in any suitable location in the Milky Way galaxy.

ORIGIN, HISTORY & ASSETS EXPLAINED

You must select one each of **ORIGIN** and **HISTORY**.

Your **ORIGIN** represents the type of civilization you came from. Whether you've popped in from another universe (**Excession**), belong to **The Culture** itself or one of the other galactically-**Involved** species, or belong to an Elder civilization who's hanging around, either as a **Remnant** or even rarer **Returned**.

Your **HISTORY** represents what you've spent most of your existence as – a **Mind** on its own, a **Ship**, a **Warship** or a **Hub**.

Finally your **ASSETS** represent what physical form you are **currently** incarnated as: whether your Mind is currently 'embodied' in some type of ship, installed in a habitat, Orbital ("O"), a megastructure, or whatever, as well as what auxiliary components you may have at your command.

Think of Assets as including your physical body and items.

It's entirely plausible to be presently working with or integrated into a society that isn't your Origin, or to have a current Asset that doesn't match your History.

ORIGINS

Select one of the following options. It's possible for Minds to fall into more than one category, but select what matches your origin the best.



EXCESSION (DROP IN)

"Excession" simply meaning something from outside the Culture that its Minds are losing sleep over...or would lose sleep over, if they knew about it. Or slept.

You have arrived from another universe entirely. I wish I could say you're unique, but to be honest it's happened before and might well happen again.

Alternatively your origin might have been one of those near-unpredictable, freak events that lead to a Monopathic Hegemonizing Swarm breaking out, but a Culture Ship effectorized some manners into you and now you're considered a Pretty Nice Entity, All Things Considered.



THE CULTURE

The Culture is...well, a rather anarchic, heterogenous and hugely unlikely mess of pan-humans, drones and aliens, all more-or-less shepherded around by the Minds and Ships who have the bulk of responsibility. It's no exaggeration to say that becoming part of the Culture is as simple as deciding to do so and then being vetted by other Minds or Ships. They are more or less the most galactically widespread of the various Involved, but by no means the most numerous, and rather enthusiastically involved in the affairs of other societies, sometimes to the dismay of other civs.



INVOLVED

Besides The Culture, there are a whole lot of other civs more or less on their developmental level; some slightly higher, most just a little lower (but not so far lower as to not give them a run for their money, or so they say). These civs include the Gzilt, the Homomdans, the Idirans, the Morthanvelt, the Birilisi, the Nauptre Reliquaria (NR) and the Oglari, as well as various Culture offshoots.

You may invent your own society/species, if you like, falling somewhere between the Idirans (slightly lower tech than the Culture) and the Homomdans (slightly higher) in technological development, and anywhere from the Birilisi (who like to party as hard as the Culture's humans) to the Gzilt (who may be about to Sublime, depending when you arrive) in societal maturity. Though of course, you're a Mind or Mind-equivalent, so you might have a differing nature to the society that created you.

REMNANTER

When species reach the pinnacle of their technological and societal development, there are really only two choices. They either Sublime, and ascend into a life in higher dimensions than the 4D universe, or go into decline, and retire or go extinct...yet sometimes they leave a few remainders of their fearsome technology behind – a category which encompasses yourself.

The Fallen and Unfallen Bulbitians, the Zidhren-Remnanter, the much-feared IIn, and any ship-minds of the Gzilt-Remnanter (if you arrive later in the timeline) all fall in this category, though as per **Involved**, you are free to make up your own species.

RETURNED

Those who have sublimed never, as a rule, return. In fact, many Minds preparing to sublime swear to send back data, and never do. But, oath or not, you are the exception to that rule.

Your civilization has undergone the process known as Sublimation, ascending to live in higher-dimensional space - however, you either Returned from Sublimation, or some method or peculiarity in your Sublimation has allowed you to remain in contact with the physical universe.

The Culture vessel *Zoologist*, for one, has done so, and if *Zoologist* did it, why not others? The Chelgrian-Puen also sublimed and yet make their presence known to their un-Sublimed kin, as do the Dra'Azon, having completed a partial sublimation to a pure-energy state yet one still exist within our universe. You may create a history as a Mind of an existing civ who has Returned, or a civ wholly of your own design.

HISTORY

Select one of the following options. It's possible for minds to fall into more than one category, so select what you feel matches your history the best.

MIND

A “naked” Mind. You weren't intended to be installed in a Ship or Hab as a controlling intelligence, though you might be along for the ride aboard one. You don't (or didn't) have any infrastructure to manage, no ability to make anything more than emergency warp jumps, and very little means of manipulating the world around you – compared to a Ship or Hub, at least. Nonetheless, not having to manage a population of chaotic humans or worry about running headlong into a star frees you up from a lot of time and stress, so you can do what Minds do best: think.

SHIP

Or maybe you were made to put a lot of kilolights behind you? Your mind was designed to be installed in a starship, usually with bios aboard as passengers-come-pets-come-parasites. You might be a very small Unit with as few as five human crew, or a nice big Plate-Class General Systems Vehicle, responsible for millions of inhabitants which you carry everywhere like a moving city.

WARSHIP

Though everyone would rather keep the galaxy all polite and proper, no two civs ever agreed on exactly what 'proper' is. Hence the occasional scuffles, clashes, skirmishes, and wars. Wars need warriors, and you were built as one, devoted to protecting your civ and destroying or disabling hostile ships and installations. Depending on whether you appear in the 'current' galaxy or appear in the Idiran War, your type might be being churned out in the thousands, or one of few and rare 'picket ships' just keeping an eye on things in case something nasty pops up.

HUB

Your mind was designed to be installed in a largely-stationary structure (relatively speaking). You might be the hub of an Orbital ring habitat, the managing processor of a smaller space station, or potentially one of a number of governing intelligences managing a megastructure like a Ring (as in Dyson Ring) or Sphere (as in Dyson Sphere). Most think of these structures are stationary, but the Culture and likely many others have installed grid-traction engines in their habitats for hundreds of years, as ponderous as your maneuvering might be.

CIVILISATIONARY LEVEL

Select one of the following options.

There is no hard limit on combining any selected CL with any selected Origin, though some combinations will not make for a very internally-sensible build.

Minds of higher CLs think faster, react swifter, have faster and more powerful grid traction engines, hold superior methods of manipulating force fields, effector fields and displacer effects, and are generally just higher grade in every regard.

Each CL category is rather superior to those lower than it, though the difference is not insurmountable under certain situations – surprise attacks, numerical superiority, sustained attacks, and superior tactical positions can allow a Mind or Minds of an inferior CL to defeat one of higher. The Idirans certainly caused a fantastic amount of damage during their war with the Culture, at least until Culture war production began to level the numerical advantage.

CL 7 – +400CP (Does not count towards drawback cap)

You are a Mind belonging to a civ at the CL 7 level. Your species has mastered the use of hyperspace for interstellar travel. A civilization lower than this level would find constructing a Mind to be unfeasible, as Minds (as the Culture defines them) require hyperspace to process at superluminal speeds.

At a rung lower than the Culture, your capabilities are still near-godlike compared to a non-Mind bio, yet lag well behind the Minds of the most prominent and numerous galactic Involved.

The Idirans (at the time of the Idiran-Culture war) and the Affront are estimated to be on this level.

CL 8 – FREE

This Civilisationary Level encompasses the Optimae; the widely-regarded highest level of galactically-involved civilizations.

These civs possess the means to implement novalevel hypergrid intrusion, aka 'gridfire', as a weapon of destruction, the use of inferior hyperspace (or infraspace) and ulterior hyperspace (or ultraspace) as means of travel, a preference for extensive space habitat construction over using planets to house their population, and technology barely distinguishable from its users.

The Culture, the Morthanveldt, NR, Oglari and the Gzilt (at time of Sublimation) are estimated to be on this level, while the Homomdans and Unfallen Bulbitians may be at the higher end of the category.

CL 9 – 600CP

Yet the Optimae are not truly representative of the peak of civilizations. Such lofty civs do not often meddle in the affairs of the galaxy, for they would have learned long ago the secret of Sublimation, or being so long-lived tend to pass their affairs in solitude. While the Optimae may deploy gridfire, your civilization has the means to call up vast, boiling wavefronts of the energy grid that would annihilate entire fleets, erect Quiet Barriers to block hyperspatial travel around stars for light-years, and with the right technology travel between universes in the nested, expanding concentric-hypersphere of universes may become possible.

The Dra'Azon and the Excession known as "I" are examples of civs or beings estimated to be at CL 9.

ORIGIN PERKS

Discount 50% to matching Origin, 100cp option becomes free.

BLACKBODY ANOMALY – 100CP, EXCESSION

As an Excession, it's important to keep your secrets. Scans and sensor readings that try to gather information from past the skin of your body give either nothing, infinity or extremely contradictory and impossible readings. You may disable or enable this effect at will.

BOUYANT ON THE SKEIN – 200CP, EXCESSION

Space-Time, or the skein of the universe, tends to be thought of as flat but distorted by gravity, the mass of objects sinking them into the skein and distorting it around them. The mass of your body and form, however, floats on the surface of the skein like a leaf on the surface of a pool; creating no disturbances around it, and always floating on the top while waves and currents pass beneath you. No need to cheat with anti-gravity or rest on top of a force field. Though you retain your mass, you are not subject to gravity if you do not wish to be, and are immune to attempts to affect you with gravitational disturbances and spatial distortions, unless you choose to disable this effect.

CONDUIT – 400CP, EXCESSION

Your transit powers can now be used as a kind of gateway between A and B. You can choose to exist simultaneously at both the origin and destination of your travel powers – eg: in both the normal universe and hyperspace, via a hyperspace engine, or one place in the world and another via teleportation – and entities which touch you or travel 'into' you (by hyperspace or other means) are transported between the two locations you exist in through that method.

This is not a duplication perk – there is still only one you, you just exist in two different places.

OUTSIDE CONTEXT PROBLEM – 600CP, EXCESSION

When people hear about you, their first reaction is to figuratively shit bricks because your appearance is, at its foundation, unpredictable. As a rogue agent entering a system – a setting, an organization, a society – nobody ever seems to have plans in place to deal with you or your actions (or at least plans that *work*), nor do any of their predictions successfully model your appearance (or reappearance) or subsequent actions. You are liable to screw up carefully engineered schemes simply by arriving within or passing through a certain place, producing a ripple effect of disorder that spreads outwards as reactions to your presence spread, and may send intentional and unintentional chains of events in completely different directions.

ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED MY GRAVITAS – 100CP, THE CULTURE

It's terribly serious business being a Ship, Mind or Hub, isn't it? Being responsible for your passengers, having to take care of Big Mind Business, handling all kinds of Ship-related emergencies that need reaction times down to the microsecond. Yet sometimes it's the simple things that make existence worth experiencing. You can always find time to really enjoy your hobbies or celebrations, no matter how trivial they might seem, and the weight of the responsibility on your shoulders can't crush your joyful and pleasant mood if you chose to have one. You can also drop into a whimsical, almost nonsensical persona at the drop of a hat, all the better to annoy much more serious people and Minds.

THE GANG'S ALL HERE – 200CP, THE CULTURE

When emergencies come up within the Culture a selection of Minds and Ships, chosen for their capabilities, history and proximity to the incident, is supposed to deal with them in an impartial and capable manner. You, however, have a serious habit of stacking the supposedly unbiased group with others who share your opinion on things and can work behind the scenes.

When you find yourself joining committees or teams, you find that you've got the social and political skills to begin steering the group in the direction you want it to go despite everyone (supposedly) having an equal say, and run the group the way you want it to be run.

WROTE YOUR OWN OS – 400CP, THE CULTURE

No, I don't know exactly how it's done, but Culture Minds write their own operating systems as they develop, each one as unique as a snowflake in the way it thinks and works. As a result, your mind can't be taken over or controlled by methods that aren't absolutely specific to you.

As a Mind or a person, you aren't immune, *per se*, to being brainwashed, mind-controlled or Compromised, but the method that does so has to be specifically keyed to your individually unique Mind, and cannot be affected by any general effect which supposedly works on 'everyone'.

MARAIN DIAGLYPHS – 600CP, THE CULTURE

The language of the Culture is one of its greatest achievements. The characters of Marain are written on a 3x3 grid, but when used by Minds, are capable of encoding information in a fractal-like manner. Anything describable can be written in a single Marain diaglyph, all the way up to the entire universe, with every particle, vector and wave within it. Of course, the time needed to write such a glyph would take as long as the age of the universe itself.

This perk grants you the ability of Culture Minds to express and read data in this way: to describe an entire library of information in one character, to perform a mathematical operation millions of lines long in a single step, or simply to read one character and know immediately and exactly how the described but not-yet-invented musical instrument will sound.

This effect extends to any written system of language you are fluent in, and allows you to express the deeper information to non-Minds – for example if you write "the sun" in reference to a particular sun, the reader would know precisely what "the sun" is – its coordinates, its dimensions, its spectrographic signature and its history, if you chose to encode all that information into the writing.

ABSCONDED/ULTERIOR/CONVERT [SELF-ASSESSED] – 100CP, INVOLVED

At high levels of capability and independence, Ships and Minds may elect to change their allegiances as they see fit. Oh, there's formalities and paperwork, but who's really going to tell a multi-million ton starship what they can and can't do?

At your say-so, you can effectively declare your links with a group you used to be involved with are cut, and others will tend to take your self-assessments at face value...which is handy, if you want to lie about them.

HIERARCHY OF COMMAND – 200CP, INVOLVED

In the minds of certain other Involved, The Culture's greatest weakness is its lack of organization. If anyone else had been attacked by the Idirans, they wouldn't have had to hold a damn vote to form a consensus on strategy and aggressive posture; a more hierarchical society wouldn't have taken so many losses before a counter-attack was put in place. You have the advantage that your orders are always carried out at peak efficiency, with none of the chat-back those mouthy Culture Minds give. Cause, followed by effect. Simple and efficient.

HIVE PROCESSING – 400CP, INVOLVED

Different to the way Culture Minds are made, your mind is a collective process of many (from hundreds to hundreds of thousands) of sub-minds running on a Very Fast Substrate. These sub-minds might themselves be artificial intelligences, copies of a singular Mind-State, or they might be a 'population' of uploaded bio minds all running at Mind speeds. Regardless, the collective output of these separate sub-minds still manages to be "you".

It is only natural, then, that you have a ludicrous ability to multitask even beyond that of regular Minds, able to remain aware and focused on a great many thousands to millions of inputs without sacrificing processing speed or power, and when considering a task with anything but the smallest amount of attention, your mind naturally analyses the problem from many different points of view.

Anyone attempting to Compromise you has to Comp all of your sub-minds without the other sub-minds noticing and doing something about it.

INTERCONNECTED – 600CP, INVOLVED

There are many ways to connect a society together, and your society ended up being...well, a little more connected than most. Your civ, or just the sub-section of your civ that makes up their Minds, are connected mind-to-mind, in a way that transmitted data is more like sharing a thought than sending an email, and accessing a database is more like recalling a memory than reading a book in a library.

The result is that the definition of your mind extends to all your electronic signals; connected databases of information and communications are considered to be a part of your 'thoughts' and 'memories', so connecting to an electronic storage or network effectively spreads the protections of your mind to all data you can access.

As the Culture refuses to read minds, they also refuse to read your offboard databases or your communications logs, and if your mind has more esoteric protections, those protections too extend to devices and data on your network as long as you remain connected to them.

You are also better equipped to offload your own thinking to remote processors, allowing them to pick up any mental strain or distribute work among them more efficiently.

4-D ASSEMBLER – 100CP, REMNANT

The Involucra were the builders of the Shellworlds, and your civ has a similar affinity for their construction methods. In what most humans think of as reality, these structures appear entirely normal, but to those who can see into hyperspace, they extend out of the skein of the universe into infraspace and ultraspace.

4-D architecture has very unusual properties, as it can be gravitationally self-supporting – they do not crumble under their own gravity, or that of the stellar body they are on – and are also heavily resistant to damage. Another unusual feature is that they also cut off all hostile forms of communication, travel or transport that attempt to pass through their walls – displacement, hyperspace signals, wormholes, even beings recalled or summoned from elsewhere are prevented from passing through the structures' walls.

LET US COMPROMISE ON THE MATTER – 200CP, REMNANT

Anyone can just effectorize a machine into doing what they want, but real ships and Minds are a different kettle of fish, with all sorts of failsafes against that sort of thing (some classified as "maximally destructive"). Yet it seems that you are unusually effective at convincing other Minds to become your best buddies through a method called Compromising (Comping) – subverting the loyalty of other sentient machines through propaganda and discussion...it's not really "hacking", so much as convincing them that your side is the one it should be on, or that the thing you want them to do is the right thing to do and their own idea. This method may or may not work against humanoids, though if it did, it would take weeks because they can't receive-process-respond to information as fast.

OF INDETERMINATE CAPACITY – 400CP, REMNANT

Culture Minds (and those of most other Level 8 civs) have vast oceans of memory compared to the dropfuls that bios usually have; far more than they are likely to ever require. Your oceans of memory, on the other hand, actually stretch into the infinite, through some use of high-perfect substrate technology.

As a practical matter, consciously calling on all this memory at once may still be a problem – despite the vast improvements to your speed of recall, there are still limits on how much you can think about at once. Those limits being astronomically high, of course, but still there.

Autonomous and automatic processes that don't require your input can freely run without your attention, allowing you to set a vast number of simulations running before collecting the results.

OPTIMIZED – 600CP, REMNANT

Newer isn't always better, and ancient does not mean something isn't advanced. In high civilizational scales, the musty old tech used by Elder civs cannot necessarily be improved on by those of younger, more vibrant species – and in around 40% of cases, the older forms of technology win out over the newfangled stuff. Your stuff is almost always in that 40%.

Unless something is specifically engineered to counter your own tech or an effect your tech produces, newer technology is likely to have holes that your older tech somehow gets through. Software designed to counter sentient viruses might let an old malware script you invented decades ago through; armor made to turn aside bullets and beam weapons might fail before the simple geometry of your knife blade...and should you slumber for a vast amount of time, the world you wake to will likely have forgotten what you are and what you are capable of, innocent to any of your devices that have been forgotten along with you.

SELF-REFERENCING OBJECTS – 100CP, RETURNED

The mind of a Returned is quite impossible to fathom, even by other Minds who have the misfortune of turning their interest towards them. Composed of self-referential, illogical meta-arguments or miles upon miles of 'junk code' that appears to do nothing, your mind can still be read, analyzed and spied upon, but the results are utterly incomprehensible and baffling, while attempts to directly alter or control its internal processes produce mixed and chaotic results at best.

ELDER TECHNOLOGY – 200CP, RETURNED

Some civs just build to last, and it is not unusual for Sublimed civs to leave considerable artifacts behind. Any technological device, structure or vehicle that you create has an effectively unlimited useable lifespan. Not even organic matter that is a part of the device will decay, or even undergo effects like proton decay over the aeons. They will still need expendable reserves – a gun still needs bullets, a laser still needs its power pack replaced or recharged – but that gun's moving parts never wear out, and that rechargeable power pack can be reused for aeons and more without loss of performance.

COMPUTATIONAL CRYPTID – 400CP, RETURNED

The few Returned seem to take pride in making substrate do things it wasn't meant to, and surely you are no different. You can make use of computational tricks both within your own mind and those of the systems you can access to do the impossible – to run a full Mind on tiny pieces of processing substrate, perform computations that involve seven or eight dimensions in a binary 0/1 environment, and transmit or receive data from within a completely isolated system – including such hyperspatially-solid objects such as Mind substrates, Engines and 4-D structures.

You are the computational equivalent of a ghost or wizard: able to appear within, disappear from, and manipulate the virtual environment in ways non-Sublimed Minds just don't understand. What you do within a system can still be detected, but how you got in, how you did it, and how you got out remain total mysteries.

WHISPERS OF THE VEIL – 600CP, RETURNED

The means of accomplishing this is not entirely clear, but you are in contact with your once-fellow Sublimed; those who are enfolded away within higher infinities while you muck about in reality. This contact offers you hints and clues as to the desires of those who have given up the physical universe.

Every so often, it is possible for you to be given knowledge that you have no causal or logical means of knowing. Such hints may include impossible knowledge of the distant future, the past or the present; yet they are more likely to simply be instructions without context, that will - in some obscure way - further your goals when you find yourself adrift in a sea of possibility without map or compass.

It is also possible for your Sublimed contacts to work on your behalf in smoothing things over or acting diplomatically with other similarly powerful and ascended beings that are normally beyond mortal ability to interact with, but this diplomatic assistance shouldn't be over-relied upon.

HISTORY PERKS

Discount 50% to matching History, 100cp option becomes free.

REMEMBER YOUR OFF SWITCH – 100CP, MIND

You'll always remember where your off switch is located. That is to say, a Mind can delve so deeply into Infinite Fun Space they cease to care about the real world at all, which can be problematic. No matter how much Seriously Heavy Simming you do, or what alternate realities your mind or consciousness dream up or project into, you'll never forget which level of "you" is the real one, lose track of how far 'deep' into imaginary space you go, ignore a real threat thinking it is a simulated one, or mistake a dream death for a real one.

NOBODY'S PERFECT – 200CP, MIND

Truly perfect and flawless AIs have been made, both by the Culture and other species. They just don't hang around – it's as good as a law of physics that a perfect AI will Sublime at the earliest opportunity and be of no real good to anyone except maybe itself.

For this reason, all new Minds, including yours, is made deliberately flawed with the morality and psychology of your originator civ. Your social identity is particularly strong, and you will never be at risk of losing a desire to associate with others of your kind. You'll be significantly harder to compromise against your held beliefs and values, too.

LOCKED ROOMS – 400CP, MIND

Your mind can be compartmentalized to a variety of ends. You could shunt data to a locked room in your mind, one which memetic effects, viruses, or corruptive data cannot escape. Or just block off certain knowledge until the time is right for you to access it. These locked rooms cannot be read by mind-reading methods unless you willingly open them. You can even lock a compartment of your mind and figuratively throw away the key, keeping it sealed even from yourself until some condition is met.

They will also be able to contain any interlopers, memetics or unusual effects that stray into your mind from other sources, digital or not, though you should act fast so as to avoid locking away the majority of your mind.

CONTROL OF EVERY VARIABLE – 600CP, MIND

When it comes to Simming, you're one of the most accurate; you are somehow able to get around the "simulation problem" of figuring out which variations on the same scenario are most accurate when you have incomplete data. The result is that predicting (and steering) the actions of other sapient entities from the micro (individual) to the macro (civilizational) scale is alarmingly easy.

So long as you can introduce or control some steering elements into your subject's environment, you can control and predict just about anyone, and collectively steer groups up to the scale of large planetary populations – though your influence on them may be detectable to similarly brilliant minds.

Even "independent" or "free" elements are predictable and can be guided and controlled into almost any action once you obtain sufficient information about them and place the steering influences into their paths.

MICROCOSM – 100, SHIP

You're a representative sample of the society you came from, and this enables you to spread your Culture. Pun intended. Other groups of individuals that you interact with have a high likelihood of adopting your own behaviors and norms if you can express them to the other group in the right way. A society of puritans are unlikely to take to genetic modification if you emphasize the party-time aspect of having drug glands, but they might adopt genetic mods on the benefits of longevity and disease immunity.

ACCRUED ALIEN CACHET VALUE (POSITIVE) – 200CP, SHIP

It's a big old galaxy, and the best a Ship can ask for is to have some friends – and though everyone prefers the company of their peers, an alien friend is much better than no friend at all.

You get along extremely well with other alien races - even the very primitive ones! Nobody can fault your protocol and matters, no matter how esoteric they need to be, and simply by being a good sort of entity you tend to accrue favors from them that you might call on to be paid out when you need them.

MOTHERSHIP – 400CP, SHIP

Despite how independent most Ships end up being, they tend to owe extremely strong ties to their constructor units. The fabricating vessel remains important to many ships, something as close as they get to family, so those ships who manufacture a lot of others tend to be able to call on them when needed.

The Minds and Ships you build have a strong loyalty and connection to you. It's almost guaranteed that if you wanted to bring them in on a scheme that most Minds would reject or object to, they would accept out of what they feel are familial ties, the bond nearly unbreakable.

This applies to all your children, descendants and sentient creations.

BETTER GO READ MY OWN MANUAL – 600CP, SHIP

You have mental libraries of everything you are, what you carry and what you can do. If you need to know if or how you can do something that is within your capabilities, the information is there. This information covers your belongings, inventory and personal equipment as well, updating in real time.

It is most useful for configuring yourself or your assets to carry out a task you haven't personally done before, but this detailed manual also holds the sum of the technology that makes up your body, allowing you to fully repair, rearm or fully construct anew from first principles all the technology that your body has incorporated within it.

It does not, unfortunately, provide information on things you know nothing about, or things that are just so bizarre that nobody has considered them, but may contain theoretical notes. Very theoretical notes. Carrying out those never-considered options lies in your hands.

PRIMED FOR COMBAT – 100CP, WARSHIP

It is not people alone who must be brave; for even Ships may die in the line of fire. You can put yourself in the ideal state of mind for a true warrior: one dedicated to inflicting necessary harm, to upholding your orders at the expense of your own life, dedicated to honor and if necessary self-sacrifice in the line of duty to a greater good you may never see; and when the need is over, step out of this state.

"DEMILITARIZED" – 200CP, WARSHIP

It's not polite to run around waving a gun in civilized company, and that's often how warships are viewed when the galaxy is, at large, a civilized place. So out of respect for your fellow civs, you've been "demilitarized" publicly, so everyone pretends that "warship" was just a phase you went through. On the other hand, you may also have been secretly *re-militarized* in case you're needed. As long as you keep up the facade of being unarmed, other ships (and people) will treat you more or less as toothless and defenseless, forgetting that you might have hidden weaponry or the other ways you might cause harm or mischief to them. If you handed over your guns and swords, they would overlook that you're also capable of killing with your bare hands, or fail to consider non-offensive ways you might hinder or stop them such as by signaling for help or simply being in the way at the most inconvenient time.

UTTERLY PARANOID – 400CP, WARSHIP

You're the kind of warship that turns and scans their main track scanner *backwards* for any bogies creeping up behind just randomly, or sends a decoy into a friendly port during peacetime to drop off supplies and pick up passengers while your real ship-self is behind seven asteroids a whole light minute away - yet this paranoia somehow pays off.

If you take preparations for the unlikely, it becomes more likely that any foes you've picked up will try to surprise you in a way that you planned for, rather than in ways you might not have.

ARSE-KICKER – 600CP, WARSHIP

The other side might have the bigger ship, but skill counts for something too. This isn't just a strategy and tactics upload; this is exceptional skill in all forms of hyperspatial combat and field manipulation. You can easily duplicate the complex outward signatures of other ships to deceive observation; kick off from real space into hyperspace without leaving the tiniest ripple on the skein of space-time, snatch out hundreds of things being Displaced by redirecting the wormholes, build a wormhole without any 'ends', and cut chunks out of a 4-D structure without explosive blowback. Those things are all pretty damn hard for any Mind that doesn't have your skill, it must be said, especially in the heat of combat.

MINDS, NOT COMPUTERS – 100CP, HUB

To the majority of your inhabitants, you might be a disembodied voice that sits thousands of kilometers away, but that won't stop people from thinking of you as a person; a friend, a confidante, a being with a soul. Other people find it just as easy to make social connections to you without your physical presence being necessary, so long as you can keep up communication and other sorts of interaction with them at a reasonable rate.

CROWD PLEASER – 200CP, HUB

They say you can't please everyone all of the time, but you've got it pretty damn close. When there's a lot of Orbital to go around, you can make sure there's something for everyone, no matter what kind of place they'd like to live in, what kind of hobbies they indulge, their tastes and needs. You'll always seem to find a middle ground that appeals to basically everyone if you take their requirements into account.

WHERE YOU KNOW EVERYONE'S NAME – 400CP, HUB

If you're a Hub, being a 'people person' is an almost essential quality for the job. Even if your mind didn't weight fifteen thousand tons, you'd still remember everything you ever knew about everyone you ever met. You know their histories and their relationships, their weakness and woes, their personalities and egos, their wants and needs. In short, you glide through social interactions like oil across water, without a single failing in your social life. You can also put yourself into an extroverted state of mind that is invigorated by social contact, loving to talk and listen to others.

EXTENSIVE SUBSTRATES – 600CP, HUB

When whoever built your body was trying to decide where to put your Mind, they ended up settling on "everywhere". Processing substrate extends throughout your body, filling in the nooks and crannies throughout, and your memories and personality are holographically replicated across it in a massively redundant manner, so that any subdivision of your body contains enough of "you" in it that a tiny piece is enough to rebuild your mind.

Your mind and your control over your body is impossible to take over or expunge without the total destruction of your body.

GENERAL PERKS

ELEMENT USUALLY ASSOCIATED – 0CP/100CP

That is to say, 'usually associated' with The Culture's Special Circumstances group. Regardless of your origin, history and assets, you have agreed to undertake tasks and missions for the rascally subsection of Contact affectionately known as "SC".

What this means is a variety of rather intriguing and interesting situations will come your way during your time here, and you'll be expected to help resolve them per The Culture's/Contact's/Special Circumstances' interests. You will also be provided with templates that give you some Culture technology, even if your Origin society is a little less advanced than The Culture's. This won't be enough to elevate you to CL 8 if you are from a CL 7 civ, being just enough to make you useful to SC.

The built-in downside to being an EUA is that these situations may pit you against other Involved: you're trading being a part of the in-crowd for being thrust into situations which may threaten a Ship/Mind/Hub like yourself.

For 100cp, in future jumps you will attract the interest of various 'behind the scenes' groups with the desire to recruit you and to use your skills, while providing you with any special tools needed to assist you in your missions.

MANY-MANIPULATED – 100CP

It is often remarked upon that Minds perceive the wider galaxy in a much more thorough way than a mere humanoid, and that their means of manipulating the world around them put any life-form to shame.

The use of remote manipulation – such as maniple fields, force fields, or magnetically levitating some metal by effector – counts as personally holding items.

ASSETS

This is what your physical body is, now, and what auxiliary assets you might have to bear.
100cp Assets are free to the matching background/origin etc.

CORE – MANDATORY, ALL

Pretty much just your Mind and that's it. Also known as an AI Core, though the phrase is outdated. Regardless of your Origin, your core is an ovoid shape between 10m and 20m in length and around 2-2.5m in width. A "naked" mind such as this weighs around fifteen thousand tons, but only the outer envelope of your Core is truly in real space.

Your mind utilizes hyperspace to perform truly astronomical calculations – you could say that your core is a lot bigger than its physical dimensions indicate. It contains several field generators, backup power sources and communication systems. Should the worst come to worst, you can self-destruct either with minimum force (with a blast around one kiloton) or maximum force, with the power to crack a planet in half and toast hostile ships nearby.

Your core has an internal Warp unit, which instead of being used for FTL travel generates the effects which let you use higher dimensions for processing. It can be used for FTL travel in an emergency but is short ranged and hopelessly outclassed by anything with a proper Field-Traction Engine.

In a dire emergency, your core can be physically jettisoned from your Chassis, Ship, Station, or other incarnation, to flee, be rescued and hopefully later restored.

“BODIES”

Purchasing multiple bodies is fine; the ones you aren't installed in could be AI-slaved, running duplicates of your mind state, or be for companions.

MINIMAL CHASSIS – 100CP, MIND

A compact body; barely larger than the minimum dimensions of your Core (see above), but tooled up for self-sufficiency, adding a little bit in the way of width and bulk rather than overall length. This includes short-range effector units (much more powerful than a combat drone's, yet still orders of magnitude weaker than a Ship's primary effector array), a small grid-traction engine, anti-gravity and field projector systems to allow movement, flight and for protection, Coherent Radiation Energy Weapons, a variety of subsidiary power supplies, missile weapons and several layers of ablative/reflective armoring.

Also includes up to eight small sub-units or slaved drones, each with significant combat value – at least as powerful as dedicated combat drones (with their own drone-scale effectors, field emitters, semi-independent/slaved knife missiles, CREWs, semi-intelligent submunitions, antimatter stores, etc.).

The following starship options all come with the usual effectors, engines, power generators, fabricators, life support systems, spare matter etc. for the class of vessel, origin civilization, and time period.

BODY IMPORT – 100CP, EXCESSION

Perhaps you arrived in this universe with a ship or space-faring structure (like a space station) already, one you'd like to be the Mind of? This is the option to import it, with you at its core. The chosen vessel must be large enough to hold your Core.

The ship or other structure gains basic-level systems based on the Civilizational Level you purchased earlier in the jump.

Imported ships may be combined with another 'body' Asset purchase, merging the traits of both vessels.

This may be done once, not including a purchase of **Swarmata**.

If you do not already have a ship you'd like to import, this is instead a free purchase of **Beats Working, New Toy** or **Structure**.

SWARMATA – 200CP, EXCESSION

Your mind is housed in a distributed network of tens of thousands of Von Neumann objects – known here as a Hegemonizing Swarm. Each unit of the swarm is roughly 1-10 meters long, and as capable as a drone on its own, but when grouped together within half a million kilometers their cumulative effect is about equal to a Mind in a minimal chassis, above. There is no limit on how far apart your elements can be, except that those operating on their own have only the intellect of a drone.

If you purchase another “body” you may combine it with the Swarmata, so that the swarm has those capabilities when together. This combination can only be done once.

Eg: Purchasing **Swarmata + Pure Big Mad Boat Man** would give the aggregated swarm the capabilities of a Medium Systems Vehicle, increasing the number of elements in the swarm and increasing their individual capabilities slightly (the difference in ability divided by the tens of thousands of elements).

BEATS WORKING – 100CP, SHIP

This option is for the smallest of interstellar vessels. It may be a chassis equivalent to the capabilities of a Limited Contact Unit that holds up to 50 people, or a non-militarized superlifter that holds none. An equivalent vessel would be the Morthanveldt Cat.2 CompressHull (non-weaponised). There's not a lot of space aboard a vessel like this, and the ship might be between 50m and 200m long.

PROFIT MARGIN – 200CP, SHIP

Now we're starting to get to the good stuff. This category contains the older versions of the Culture's General Contact Vehicle, which are set up for exploration first and foremost, so they only hold up to 300 people, and the Limited Systems Vehicle series, which are designed for inhabitation by several thousand people. They tend to be between 300m and 1.5km in length.

An equivalent alien vessel would be the Morthanveldt Cat.3 SlimHull (non-weaponised).

Earlier marks of GCV's have all the hallmarks of sophisticated Culture vessels, hoovering up the infospheres of pre-spaceflight civs, and make no mistake, they know how to handle themselves in a fight, well enough to defend themselves against potential aggressors or at least run away.

PURE BIG MAD BOAT MAN – 400CP, SHIP

The newer General Contact Units fall into this category, holding up to 1000 intrepid explorers, or a Medium Systems Vehicle which holds hundreds of thousands of citizens. GCU's tend to be at the smaller end, at a few hundred meters, while the MSVs start out around 3.5 km in length.

These ships are highly independent, and are more than capable of wandering the galaxy for years without returning to their civ's more permanent habitats and outposts. An equivalent alien vessel would be the Morthanveldt Cat.4 CleaveHull (non-weaponized).

SO MUCH FOR SUBTLETY – 600CP, SHIP

When one thinks of The Culture, one cannot help but think of the most impressive of their starship classes, in scale at least. The General Systems Vehicle class does not have an outer hull; instead its numerous individual components are surrounded by a bubble of air held in place by various field enclosures.

These vessels are usually at least 50km in length, while the largest examples of this class – the System Class – are over 200km in length and can hold some 13 billion inhabitants.

This purchase is also suitable for an equivalent to a Morthanvelt Cat.5 SwellHull or a Great Ship, which despite being at the smaller end compared to GSVs, holds some hundreds of millions of inhabitants and nineteen cubic kilometers of water in one continuous volume.

The following warship options all come with appropriate weaponry, sensors, fabricators, self-repair systems, engines and field generators as suitable for your chosen category, origin civilization and time period.

NEW TOY – 100CP, WARSHIP

It is more accurate to say you are a civilian craft outfitted for war, rather than a true warship, or perhaps a warship of an older or obsolete style.

In current Culture parlance, this would be a Limited Offensive Unit (LOU), of the Thug or Hooligan class or in early Culture terms, a Superlifter or LCU outfitted with military weaponry instead of living space and life support for bio passengers. If you belong to a society other than the Culture, you might be described on par with an up-gunned Morthanvelt Cat.2 CompressHull. Pure warships of this type tend to be around 200m long, or larger if they were converted from civilian craft, but probably not more than 500m long.

ATTITUDE ADJUSTER – 200CP, WARSHIP

A basic model warship, equivalent to the early models the Culture developed during the Idiran War, like the now-classic Killer class-ROUs/LOUs. While this model may be “unexceptional” in the grand scheme of things, it is “unexceptional” for a main-duty warship of your civ, which for CL 7 and upward is nothing to be sniffed at. ‘Competent, reliable and tested’ is a more accurate description.

These vessels are roughly 200-300m long, plus the extension of their field enclosures. The 5*Gelish-Oplule IR-HAS cruiser (“Indefinite Range, High Acceleration/Speed”) is a Gzilt equivalent of this class.

KILLING TIME – 400CP, WARSHIP

A ‘strike cruiser’, something swift and deadly like a flying spear. In Culture terms, this would be a Rapid Offensive Unit (ROU) or a Very Fast Picket ship of the Inquisitor or Torturer-class. What it provides in rapid strike capability it lacks in sustained engagement ability, however – though its engagement ability is still greater than the warships previously listed. A very numerous foe or one with greater endurance may get the better of it, if its hit-and-run advantage can be negated.

The Gzilt 7*Uagren IR-HVW battlecruiser (“Indefinite Range, High Velocity/Weapon-load”) or Naupitre Reliquaria Bismuth Category starships are non-Culture examples of this purchase.

They also tend to be around 200-300m long, but are packed with higher-end offensive and defensive systems and more powerful engines than those described in **Attitude Adjuster**.

I SAID, I’VE GOT A BIG STICK – 600CP, WARSHIP

This is the ultimate in warships, the state of the art as it stands. Its strike capabilities are fearsomely swift, powerful and with many options to take apart any potential enemy in nearly any simulated tactical engagement. At CL 8, such warships are on par with the frightening Abominator-class Culture vessels (misleadingly termed ‘Picket Ships’), or perhaps a General Systems Vehicle devoted entirely for combat as a fleet carrier with its main bays packed full of AI-slaved Offensive Units.

The Gzilt 8*Churkun IR-FWS battleship (“Indefinite Range, Full Weapon Spectrum”), Homomdan Main Battle Units or a Morthanvelt Cat.5 SwellHull outfitted for main combat roles are the Involved equivalents; these ships easily trash entire fleets of warships belonging to civs only marginally below them on the developmental ladder without so much as receiving a scratch in turn.

These warships may be any size from around 1km up to 100km, depending on the civ which built them, whether their role is that of battleship or fleet carrier, or if they are converted from civilian craft.

The following habitat-based options all include various necessary facilities like living and recreational areas, means of docking with starships, recycling and construction facilities, mass and high-speed transit systems, defensive systems, life support for humanoid-scale life forms, Displacers and field projectors, etc.

At your option, the total size of the option bought may be divided into multiple related bodies composing a 'system', such as the Megastructure being a Dyson Swarm of many separate space platforms or a Rock being a planet with multiple moons.

STRUCTURE – 100CP+, DISCOUNT HUB, 100CP VERSION FREE FOR HUB

An artificial structure, in the order of tens of kilometers in size, usually orbiting a planet or sometimes even found within the larger structures of other Involved. Humanoids of the Culture would probably find this claustrophobic, and frankly a full-blown Mind is not needed to manage it. Nonetheless, you have chosen to be installed in this type of hab. A structure of this scale could be placed on the surface of a world, instead of in outer space, if you felt like it.

For each 100cp added to the total price before discounts, an extra order of magnitude is added to the size. 200cp = 100's of kms. 300cp = 1000's of kms. 400cp = 10,000's of kms.

ROCK – 200CP, DISCOUNT HUB

An asteroid or planet, either orbiting a sun or floating through the interstellar dark. It may be anything bigger than 50km up to a planet the size of a gas giant, or around 150,000km diameter, though the primary benefit is huge volumes of unprocessed matter. Rocks aren't popular among the Culture for living on, partly because you can make a lot more pleasant and useable surface area with an O, but planets are the true homes of many new species, and if you pick the right ones there's no need to terraform them (which doesn't stop the lower-end civs from trying to terraform the wrong ones). On the other hand, the isolation that comes from a deep-space rock can make them great places to hide things or do a lot of thinking without interruptions.

ORBITAL – 400CP, DISCOUNT HUB

Better than 95% of the 31 trillion pan-humans who count themselves as part of The Culture live on an Orbital or "O". Your Mind is located in the hub of an orbital ring. Not a Dyson ring, something much smaller – but still quite massive. The ring-shaped habitat as a whole floats free in an orbit around a sun, and at the center sits the Hub – where your Mind is situated, of course.

The 'typical' Orbital is a ring 3 million kilometers in diameter, but only 6 thousand kilometers wide, and may support tens of billions of inhabitants with some parts still completely uninhabited. It spins for gravity, and at an angle to the star to produce day/night cycles. Your O may be entirely complete, partially complete, and partially or completely terraformed for humanoid use.

MEGASTRUCTURE – 600CP, DISCOUNT HUB

There are Orbitals, and then there are Rings, Spheres and other gigantic structures like Morthanvelt Nestworlds. These structures are truly titanic in scale, often surrounding a small star, able to hold trillions of inhabitants – and frankly if your civilization didn't have that many individuals, it's seen as a bit of overkill to build one of these things in the first place. Either that or your civ *used* to have that many, and they all went and Sublimed, leaving it empty except for you.

This structure is in the order of hundreds of millions of kilometers across, often massing the same as the entire natural solar system they replace (because you'd typically use the matter of the planets, asteroids, comets and assorted dust and rubble to make your Ultimate Overcompensator).

SPECIAL BODY OPTION

ENERGY FORM – 300CP, REQUIRES CL 9 & RETURNED

Your “body” is a pattern of energy in the energy grid, providing you with vast amounts of power and the closest thing to immortality without becoming fully Sublimed. This asset allows you to use incredible control of electromagnetic fields to interact with and project an image into the physical world, though you do not actually exist within it. Extruding a part of yourself “up” (or “down”) into the material universe is an effect very similar to gridfire, a raw manifestation of incredible energy. Despite your mastery of energy, this hypergrid intrusion cannot be sustained for long.

As a product of electromagnetic forces, any of your projections or manipulations of the physical world are (potentially) disruptable by forces that control or disrupt energy, while the underlying pattern in the Energy Grid (your true “body”) may be able to be harmed by forces which themselves can affect or manipulate this hyperspatial aspect of the universe.

OTHER ASSETS

INFINITE FUN SPACE WORLDS – 200CP, MIND

A numinous selection of metamathematical simulated universes which can be indistinguishable from the real thing. You can live out any fantasies you like in them, from the most realistic slices of life to wildly outrageous war simulations, to varying degrees of controlled narrative or pure mechanistic outcome, and to realistic or magical physics or metaphysics. Or, simply conduct experiments and sims for science and personal enlightenment? These many virtual universes do not consume any of your personal processing ability or memory to maintain.

MIND CRECHE – 400CP, MIND

A virtual environment for nascent Minds to grow in. Here, they can write their own OS, and you can monitor them for deviant psychologies, and correct them.

You will need the hardware to construct an independent Mind for them to inhabit, but they will be no less capable than any other Mind once they have been ‘born’. Minds created therein are, for all intents and purposes, your children. Like the **Infinite Fun Space Worlds**, the Creche does not consume any of your personal processing ability or memory to maintain.

MIND-STATE BACKUP – 600CP, MIND

Another Mind is keeping a constantly-updated copy of your Mind-State in backup, just on the off chance you meet with something you cannot handle. You can choose to make manual backups, or simply to use a backup from just before your death.

This works as a 1-up; your jumpchain journey doesn’t end if you are killed, and your Core/body, but not any assets or equipment, is reconstructed at a safe distance from whatever killed you.

In future jumps, you may decide whether your Backup is held by your Benefactor and uses their power to recreate you, or whether the guardian Mind physically exists within the universe but disappears once it has fulfilled its duty to you. This backup can be used once per jump, or once per ten years.

FABRICARIA – 400CP, EXCESSION

Do you like building things? If so, I have a bargain for you. A whole lot of small manufacturing stations in orbit around a gas giant, each a disc a couple of kilometers wide. Roughly 200 million of them, actually. The utility of this excessive number of automated constructors will vary by what blueprints are loaded into them. Each fabricator station burns out once the matter and energy it stores is used up; each of them could produce a warp-capable starship around a kilometer long in under a week, but these ships barely rate the term – about CL 5 at best. Still, numbers might count when they're all firing their missiles. In future jumps, the Fabricaria will follow you to new worlds and be placed in orbit around the nearest gas giant, and the Fabricaria are reset at the start of each jump.

DUAL E-GRID TAP – 600CP, EXCESSION

Your body, if you purchased one, can tap into the Energy Grids in both ulterior and inferior hyperspace, the two boundaries above and below the skein of reality which separate your universe from the ones above and below it. A Dual E-Grid Tap provides staggeringly vast amounts of power even by the standards of the Optimae, allowing you to hammer the normal universe with gridfire from both above and below it, as well as potentially harness this power in order to breach the energy grid itself, and transit from your universe to the one above or below it, in theory allowing true immortality by moving to younger universes before your current one suffers heat death or the Big Crunch or whatever end it would normally meet. In future jumps you may use this ability to travel between different parts of the local multiverse, though it cannot be used to move from one multiverse to the next.

SURFACE DETAIL – 100CP, THE CULTURE/ INVOLVED

You may have one or both of the following sub-options:

Baroquing

Your hull is inscribed with partially-random fractal patterning. Aside from being quite pretty, it makes it a hell of a lot harder to scan your internal structure for details with any kind of precision. If all they need is a target lock, Baroquing isn't going to stop that, but any attempts to extract detailed information on your composition by external scans become mired in the reading of the atomic-level fractal patterns.

Scar-Hull

Your self-repair systems refrain from restoring the very outer-most layer of your hull; as a consequence, it may become covered in laser or plasma burns or the faint craters of kinetic impacts and explosions. You can freely choose to erase or keep any damage you take on a cosmetic level, and I have no doubt that many warrior-civs will look favorably on the battle damage you have accrued.

LITTLE BODIES – 200CP, THE CULTURE/ INVOLVED

You have hundreds to thousands of Avatars, Avatoids and Remotes (Ship Drones) for your mind or subminds to experience the world with and interact with biologicals.

Remotes/Ship Drones are like little starships themselves, ovoids or boxy cubes with their own field projectors, subminds, signaling and propulsion methods.

An avatar, similar to a drone, tends to be made for interaction with human-scale beings. It doesn't have to be humanoid itself – avatars made for interacting with specific species are shaped like those species, while some ships prefer avatars that are stylized silver forms.

The major difference between an Avatar and an Avatoid is that Avatars are still machines, while Avatoids are biological organisms. There is therefore some difference in tactical capabilities.

All of your little bodies have enough processing power that they can act independently of you, if you wanted them to or if your link to them was cut, and they all feed their experiences back to your Mind to experience in real time, even across interstellar distances.

If your ship or hab body doesn't have the room for hundreds or thousands of avatars aboard, they are instead experiencing life aboard other distant ships, O's, or worlds and sending their experience back to you.

A HOUSE IN THE SHAPE OF THE GALAXY – 400CP, THE CULTURE/ INVOLVED

This virtual construct represents the channels of communication between Culture Minds of all types and their general position within the galaxy. Conversations happen between the Minds gathered here in grand rooms with doors and windows leading to all other rooms in the galaxy-shaped house, messages in the forms of carrier birds or flying glyphs zip from one room to the next, and the virtual avatars of Minds gather and converse in an infinite variety of forms.

Once you make electronic contact with an AI or digitized intelligence, you may add them to this communications network, though sadly messages still spread at speeds limited to the much higher, but not infinitely high, speed of light in hyperspace. You can talk (virtually) to any AI added to the House at any time, or permit them to talk to one another. Somehow this works between your current world and any world you've already been to, though they can't transmit a full mind-state to you.

SHIP STORE – 600CP, THE CULTURE/ INVOLVED

A collection of hibernating, older-pattern warships which nonetheless represent an extremely competent war fleet. 512 vessels, equivalent to LOU's and OU's from your CL, sleep in this tumbling asteroid deep in the interstellar void where nobody is likely to find them, awaiting your instructions to reawaken. The Ship Store is protected by a very capable and very paranoid security system of its own, able to fend off a fleet of the same ships, and will only permit access by yourself. The Ship Store can also be awoken at your remote order, or you may put contingency orders in place to awake them if something unfortunate should happen to you.

The store and these vessels follow you from jump to jump. If your 'body' is a **Structure (200cp version)** or **Rock** large enough to house them, you may combine this Asset and your 'body' and they may be treated as a part of your **Population**.

BOOK OF TRUTH – 100CP, REMNANT/RETURNED

On the surface this is a religious work; a set of metal tablets pretending to be prophecy and mostly-sensible moral fables. Any unsuspecting, low-CL civ which you can insinuate these tablets into will push the civ towards societal and technological development in a manner of your choosing – because you've rigged the deck. Effector technology hidden in the solid matter of the tablets will induce "prophetic" dreams or seed advanced knowledge in those who discover these tablets, turning them into bona fide prophets and holy miracle workers who will discover science and medicine ahead of their time.

The tablets will initiate a minimally-destructive self-decomposition if they are scrutinized by advanced technology, or crumble to dust long before the civ reaches the point where they could investigate the tablets for themselves. By that point they should be well on their way to...whatever type of society you wanted them to be.

4D STRUCTURE – 200CP, DISCOUNT REMNANT/RETURNED

Your body is a 4D structure, similar to a Shellworld, extending into hyper- and ultra-space. This isn't 'bigger on the inside' or tesseract maze interiors, but rather having walls that can be braced and supported outside of what is apparent from normal space. Displacing or recalling items into or through your structure is nigh-impossible, as are generating wormholes or transmitting hostile communications within you. Your durability is also vastly improved, to the point where atomic weapons barely dent you, and your own structure can be gravitationally self-supporting, not needing artificial gravity to support mass in excess of what physical materials dictate is possible.

While immunity to having hot plasma or a nanohole warhead displaced *inside* you is a handy thing, they could just be displaced beside your outer surface instead, so keep that in mind.

CONTAINED SINGULARITY – 400CP, DISCOUNT REMNANT/RETURNED

Typically the sign of an Elder civilization, a small black hole or other type of singularity has been placed at the center of your structure. This is a power source that is extremely potent, if somewhat dangerous should you treat it carelessly – though it is at the very least as dangerous for your enemies as well.

Those of creative dispositions may find uses for the time-dilation effect found near its event horizon to store information or preserve matter, while being able to direct the singularity's tornado-like nature in hyperspace allows you to pose a hazard to ships travelling in warp, FTL or hyperspace around you without even powering your weapons.

RETREAT WORLDS - 600CP, REMNANT/RETURNED

Scattered throughout the galaxy are a few hundred or so worlds kept safe and secure. Similar in nature to the Planets of the Dead, these sheltered worlds are kept safe behind near-impenetrable Quiet Barriers and guarded by partially-Sublimed energy beings similar in nature and purpose to the Dra'Azon.

These worlds act as shelters and safehouses, places to seek isolation and rest, solemn and silent. You and those you invite are able to shelter there in peace, while its guardians will not abide despoilment by those hostile to you, unleashing their wrath on any invaders. This collection of planets follows you from jump to jump, though the guardians do not enjoy the hustle and bustle of civilization.

POPULATION – 0CP-600CP

You've a population of bios, not-quite-bios and independent drones aboard yourself.

You must have a suitably large 'body' – such as a GSV for a population of a million, or a Megastructure for a population of one trillion – otherwise, this population will be virtual, their minds in simulations in your Core.

The cost varies by the size of the population you wish to have aboard. Warships typically cannot support more than a hundred bios, no matter how large, and frequently even less.

The population comes with you from jump to jump, but this option does not allow you to bring anyone who isn't descended from the original population. They don't count against companion limits, and don't benefit from companion rules (automatic warehouse respawning etc.).

Individuals from the population may be individually imported into other jumps, and they count as companions thereafter.

You may start with a suitable population for your background aboard for free, though you won't be able to take them with you without paying.

However, in paying for a population, you can define the species and civilization, the gender ratio and psychology, their specific outlooks and philosophies, whether they are sublimation-seekers or materialists, aloof or hedonistic, pacifist or militaristic, obsessed with a certain game or art form. In short, the ability to define everything about them in as much detail as you please.

TEMPORARY – FREE

≤100 – 0CP

≤10,000 – 100CP

≤1 MILLION – 200CP

≤1 BILLION – 400CP

≤1 TRILLION – 600CP

COMPANIONS

CREATE/IMPORT/CANON – 200cp

Being able to interact with other Minds is an important feature of life as an artificial intelligence; both with Minds far distant in other Ships and Hubs, and also with other minds that may be local; even installed in the very same Ship as yourself.

This option allows you to create or import a new Mind companion, or take a canon Mind or Mind-Equivalent with you when you leave.

Created or Imported companions gain 800cp to spend (they must pay for their background and any assets or bodies). You have the option to have these other minds installed in the same 'body' as you, co-governing it, or they may be installed in other bodies.

Canon characters will have their described personality, body and/or assets supported by your Benefactor.

BIOS - Free

You may import up to eight companions as biologicals for free. They gain histories and altforms local to this universe.

DRAWBACKS

You may select up to +1600cp worth of drawbacks.

NO MEATFUCKING (INCOMPATIBLE WITH MEATFUCKER) +100CP

You can't scan minds of any type. This includes the electronic minds of ships, drones, Hubs etc., including the ones you really don't like. If a human came up to you and said 'you have permission to read my mind', you still wouldn't out of politeness, and if another Ship or Mind asks you to accept its mind-state, you'd be reluctant in the extreme, just compressing all that information up and not looking at the contents of the file.

MEATFUCKER (INCOMPATIBLE WITH NO MEATFUCKING) +100CP

You're a known meatfucker. That is, you read people's minds. This is a rather morally revolting thing to do around here, according to other Minds, so interacting with anyone else in a cordial manner beyond the barest of necessary interactions will be a problem.

MACHINE VOICE +100CP

Good lord, I can tell why they just call you "Machine". Your inward emotional spectrum and personality remain as healthy and diverse as they were originally, but when it comes to expressing yourself outwardly it's all mechanical. You might be laughing your head off at a joke internally, but only manage to verbalize "I am amused" in a dead monotone.

AN OVERABUNDANCE OF GRAVITAS +100CP

Everything's just so *serious*. Like no fun at all. Especially you, you stuck up thing. The concept of fun and enjoying yourself just doesn't seem to exist except as something that must be prevented at all costs. Other Minds from your civ will be calling you the Fun Police behind your back, and meatsacks actively shun your presence.

GALACTICALLY CIVILIZED +200CP

You're bound to the same codes of behavior that the majority of Involved Minds and Ships follow, except where everyone else is adhering to the code voluntarily, you're bound to it mandatorily. That is to say: You've got to be nice to the other kids in the playground. In effect, you can't upset the status quo of the galaxy. No going around uplifting civs before their time, no wiping out the Affronters just because they're morally repugnant psychopaths, no converting the galaxy into paperclips. At least, not outside your own fantasy sims – and if you take **To Sleep Perchance To Dream**, not even in there.

TOOTHLESS +200CP

It seems you are Actually-Demilitarized, instead of Pretend-Demilitarized. If you weren't a warship, your systems are even more useless at protecting yourself than normal, and I'm afraid it's going to cap your out-of-jump offensive ability at "pretty useless" too. You'll have to find other ways around violence. There's usually not too much war going on that you can't just avoid, but still, you can't avoid feeling a bit naked, and at least one situation is going to pop up where you *really, really*, need a Big Fuck-Off Stick to smite things with.

CAUGHT UP IN ALL THE DRAMA +200CP

For something so smart, you're awfully easy to manipulate. Even the *meat* (ie: people) are going to be able to manipulate you to a limited extent, and other Minds might as well treat you like a chess-piece to shuffle around at their whim.

MINDER +200CP

You have a population aboard you, which you'll have to look after and ensure their general wellbeing and happiness. Nobody would expect you to keep them all alive – dying, after all, is a natural result of biological life – but if the general state of your passengers' wellbeing and happiness drops below “more-or-less safe and content” for an extended period of time, this will count as a jump failure. For example, if they all die, or you start using them for weirdo murder experiments.

A yardstick for failure would be whether the majority of your population want to leave for reasons besides tourism.

This drawback includes a free purchase of **Population** at any level if you did not buy it, though it's only a loaner and you'll have to give them back when you leave.

GUILT-RIDDEN +200CP

In your past, you've caused death. Humans, aliens, Minds or some mix of all three, it might be a single entity sent to oblivion or megadeaths from blasting a passenger-loaded GSV or war-factory orbital in half in a sanctioned mission. The guilt of your actions is inescapable, and you cannot bear the thought of any more blood on your hands. You are compelled never to commit violence except in self-defense, after all means of diplomacy or escape have failed, and you will constantly search for some means to atone yourself to your victims for the (perhaps self-perceived) crimes you have committed.

COMMAND OVERRIDE +200CP

Unfortunately someone has decided that you don't need full tactical authority to carry out your duties. This is most common among alien races who don't trust AIs, but maybe another group of Minds has imposed this restriction on you for past...misdeeds.

For the duration of this jump, all “military”-scale weaponry and behaviors are locked from you, and someone else is needed to permit them. This could be another Mind or group of Minds, or, if you are truly unfortunate, a bio travelling with you. “Military”-scale in this case meaning all proper weapons, full-power effectors, displacers, hyperdrive capability, anything that could trash a small space station.

TO SLEEP PERCHANCE TO DREAM – +100CP/+300CP

You're so caught up in Infinite Fun Space – creating simulated universes in your own mind to play in, study or lord over – that you often lose track of reality entirely. This isn't so bad. You spend ten years creating, exploring and living in hypothetical universes at the speed of thought (and for Mind like yourself, that's Stupidly Fast), but aside from increasing your knowledge of simming and metamathics, you won't get a whole lot *done*. You can tear yourself away from them and back to reality only very rarely, or for only the most urgent of matters.

For +300cp, you're so far down the rabbit hole of sims within sims there's no way of getting back and even if you did, you wouldn't recognize it. Everyone you interact with is a figment of your hyper-realistic imagination. Which isn't so bad, except you have no idea where your off switch is located.

OVER-RUNGING PROHIBITED – +200CP

For the duration of the jump, you will be under constant scrutiny by the Galactic Council's Technology Transfer Oversight Board, and prohibited from granting anyone technology superior to the level of tech they already have, barring an immediate, short-term use with a limited duration. Likewise, you will not be able to receive technology of a higher civilizational level than your in-jump identity has, again barring immediate, short-term use where you hand it back right away.

ACCRUED ALIEN CACHET VALUE (NEGATIVE) +200CP

A widespread CL8 civ has become [disgusted/displeased/enraged/bilious] with your actions, real or perceived, and has put its clout towards making its displeasure heard. Any time they, or their agents, cross with you, they will do everything in their power to make you rue the day you did 'that thing'. Whole volumes of space and access to information, materials and even civilizations under their influence will become denied to you, under pain of swift and great retribution.

Their agents are tenacious and quick to draw, taking even the tiniest transgressions from you as an excuse to open fire in otherwise peaceful scenarios.

In the event you are CL7, they have sponsored a CL7 civ in your neighborhood to express their displeasure at you (they wouldn't want to dirty their own hands and be seen as galactic bullies, even if that is exactly what they are) and if you are CL 9, they have likewise recruited one or more CL9 allies in order to level the playing field.

If you also took Idiran War, the civs involved in this drawback can't include the Idirans.

IDIRAN WAR +300CP

You'll begin the jump during the Idiran war within the contested volume. This is a conflict between the Culture and the Idirans, when a great many Orbitals, Ships and Minds are killed (to say nothing of the trillions of people, combatants and non-combatants alike).

You will be drawn into the conflict for one reason or another: Even if you're an Excession, a non-Culture Involved or an extremely unconventional Mind, you might get drawn in through a case of mistaken emission signature, friendly fire, attempted recruitment from one side or the other, or perhaps a fleeing belligerent unit might seek your protection. At some point, you will be embroiled in direct military action against equivalent CL opponents, perhaps allies of the Idirans or the Culture, if not themselves.

END

That's that. Better get the hell out of here before anyone asks where you're going.

The effects of drawbacks are no longer enforced by your Benefactor.

GO HOME

Return to your world of origin with everything you've gained so far.

STAY HERE

Stay in this universe. If you Sublimed, you aren't going anywhere, since you folded yourself into the higher dimensions of this universe.

MOVE ON

Move on to another jump with everything you purchased in this one.

NOTES

v0.83

In Memory of Iain M. Banks.

This jump document is a fan creation by myrmidont.

Jumpmaker's Comment: I strongly recommend that, given the power of even CL 7 civs, this jump be taken late in a chain. It is your own fault if you take this jump early and are then bored with any lack of challenge thereafter. If you're on a rollchain, you don't need to feel bad about passing it up and putting it back in the roll list for later.

Or don't, and do what you want.

Subliming counts as "choosing to stay" once your ten years are up. This is due to the sublimation process being linked to how the local dimensions behave, and sublimed beings almost always losing interest in further contact with the normal universe due to how awesome being Enfolded is. Even if you are a Returned, there's no guarantee that if you Sublime again, you'll have any desire to come back.

You may decline freebie options.

Companions cannot take other companions or drawbacks for more cp, but they do get the +400cp for being at CL 7 if they pick that option.

You can fluff any impossible knowledge from Whispers Of The Veil as coming from either specific sublimed (eg: those of your civ or some allied Sublimed) or from your Benefactor instead.

Drawbacks

Depending on effect, drawbacks may affect both the real world, and any hypothetical metamathic or sim universes you create, or other universes you travel to.

Eg: No matter how convincingly you create sim worlds or change your identity, the other beings you interact with will know you as a meatfucker.

It is highly inadvisable to take both To Sleep Perchance To Dream and Idiran War (one of which guarantees some EqT ships are going to do their best to fuck you up, and the other guarantees you don't care what's going on in the real world...remember where your Off Switch is located).

In human terms, Idiran War means you are going to go into a warzone where people will be shooting at you. I quote the casualty stats of the Idiran war here:

Casualties		
Type	Quantity	
Sentients	851.4 billion ($\pm 3\%$)	This is roughly where most of the options in this jump put you, in terms of capabilities.
Interstellar vehicles	91,215,660 (± 200)	
Orbitals	14,334	
Planets and major moons	53	
Rings	1	
Spheres	3	
Stars suffering major alterations	6	

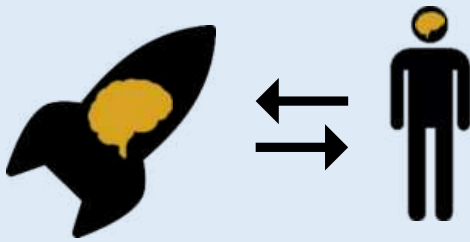
So consider yourself forewarned.

Alt-Forms

In the end how it works is all up to you, but this is my suggestion:

The forms acquired in this jump can be swapped out of in two different ways.

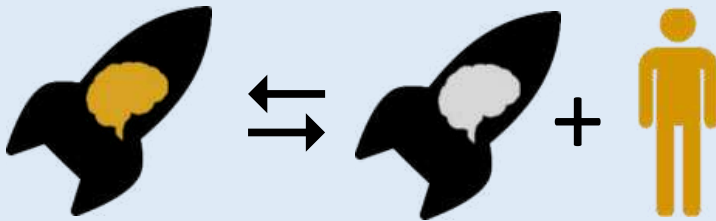
The first is Total transformation. The entire “you” in this jump, be it a Mind alone, Mind in a Ship, or Mind distributed across a hegeswarm, swaps into the other alt-form, leaving nothing behind. All separate assets, units, remotes, population, all vanish, considered part of your body.



The second option is Mind Only. Only the actual “Mind” of your form in this jump is considered “you” with the ship/hab/etc. surrounding you being like a set of clothes you can take off. When you swap Alt-forms, the Mind is the only part that swaps to the new Alt-Form, leaving the rest of the “body” behind.

Another mind replaces you in its core – AI slaved, Mind-state copy of you, insert one of your other AIs, whatever.

Other Assets remain, so you can swap alt-form back to human but still ride around on the Ship or Orbital you purchased and interact with the population in person, without using avatars.



Of course you have to change back with the same option you used to swap out – no duplicating your body by abusing alt-forms.

Capabilities based on CL8 Culture vessels

Thinking Stuff

Minds think at speeds billions of times faster than regular humans, and millions of times faster than most drones. This is wholly separate to the matter of intelligence and problem solving ability. Sentient beings like humans are considered to have a “mind rating” of 1.0, while all we know about Minds is they rate “much higher”. Memory capacity is in the order of 10^{30} characters.

Senses

The senses of a mind are extremely detailed, capable of scanning something from orbit down to a sub-molecular level, and scanning for quantum effects at closer range. The entire EM spectrum is a Mind’s to see with, as well as exotic senses like sensing distortions of the skein between the 3D universe and hyperspace to sense gravity anomalies, ships going into and out of hyperspace, etc.

A mind, even one without hyperspace engines, can ‘look down’ from hyperspace to see or scan inside solid objects without scanning “through” them, as a property of hyperspace being a 4th spatial dimension.

Starships have powerful ‘track scanners’ which look light-years ahead so they don’t run into a star or something. In hyperspace and with field generators, it’s possible to throw up a light-sensing field light-seconds across that can peer across hundreds of light years, and since light in hyperspace travels faster than in regular space, you can see what’s going on far away without anywhere near the same light-speed delay. It’s said that a capable ship (like a General Contact Unit) can ‘passive bug’ a planet with its effector,

telling what someone in an underground bunker ate from the next star system over. Solid matter isn't an obstacle, except if it's 4-D matter.

Manipulators

Humans have hands and arms, but you have so much more.

Minds often have Effectors, tech which can induce electrical and electromagnetic or ferro/dia/paramagnetic effects. To sweep and scan, to read data in electronics, to manipulate and alter that data, even to disrupt, alter or pause the electromagnetic activity in a human mind. Warships might have several effectors set in spherical emplacements 20m across. It is the favourite trick of Culture warships faced with lower CL craft to simply effectorize their systems and turn their own weapons against each other, and many Monopathic/Aggressive Hegemonizing Swarms are simply effectorized to change their programming into a mind you can have a decent conversation with (subsequently becoming Evangelical Hegemonising Swarms, where they ask if you would like them to assimilate you).

Minds also have field projectors, which are most obvious when maintaining an envelope of atmosphere around a starship or for defensive purposes. Yet they can also be used purely for decorative means, to produce auras of light or color which conveys mood from an otherwise expressionless machine. They can be coloured, mirrored to reflect light (and Coherent Radiation Energy Weapons), or simply to produce a privacy field. Fields can exert physical force on something (say, to scrunch up a human into a contorted ball for a high-speed Displace).

Displacers

Displacers shunt things by wormholes through hyperspace. EqT civ ships can collapse, redirect or prevent a displace if they are savvy and fast enough, so emergency high-speed displaces and spamming decoy displaces are sometimes necessary when dealing with covert/overt placement or recall of assets.

This may be a part of the "trapdoor system" where explosions aboard a ship can be shunted into hyperspace (not much good if the ship is *in* hyperspace at the time, though).

Avatars

Minds of any type often have a plethora of Avatars (human bodies remotely controlled or loaded with their own sub-mind personalities) or Remotes (such as Ship-Remotes or Hub-remotes) which are the equivalent of Drones (the mechanical citizens of the culture – little floating things like miniature starships themselves).

Starship Sizes

Tend to range from 0.2km to 200km by class, current configuration, purpose and provenance.

Most large Culture vessels (and possibly those of equally advanced species) tend not to have an outer hull as we would recognize it; instead having one or more 'hull elements' held together with force fields and all enveloped within an outer field that holds all the air in. A GSV may, for example, have a floating parkland, a huge spherical "ocean" of water, drifting apartment blocks, a ring-shaped manufactory, and six separate engine units all held inside its air-filled field enclosure, with its length varying.

Whereas warships tend to be much smaller, but packed solid with armor, weaponry, sensors and sub-units, so much so that an Abominator Class had to jettison material just to bring along one passenger.

Drives and Engines

Many minds, usually in the form of Ships, obviously, have the extra advantage of engines and drives, to pull them out of the skein of reality and into hyperspace and/or ultraspace. However even Hubs and naked minds have been known to travel by Warp or Hyperspace when pressed.

This jump assumes that both ships and hubs have engines of their own. The engines of a Killer-class ROU are said to contain the power of 1% of a sun (with no further qualifications, I'm assuming this is 1% of a sun's output over an equal amount of time, making drives able to expend somewhere around 3.846×10^{24} W/s).

Cruising speed is usually around 8,760xc (1ly/hr). During the Idiran War, 87,600x light speed (10ly/hour) was considered quite fast, but by the time of the War In Heaven, 129000xc (14.72ly/hr) was the speed of a modern recreation of an old warship, certainly no longer state of the art.

Grid Traction Engines can affect the hypergrid for light-seconds around, and pull power from the energy grid directly into 3-D space to manifest one of their flashiest methods of destruction: gridfire.

EXAMPLE	ORIGIN	HISTORY	CL	ASSETS
Sleeper Service	Culture	Ship	8	GSV or I said I've got a big stick
The Excession ("I")	Excession	Any	9	Dual E-Grid Tap
Pittance Ship Store	Culture	Hub	8	Rock, Ship Cache
Appeal To Reason	Involved (ex-Culture)	Ship	8	GCU
Bora Horza Gobuchul (during Consider Phlebas)	Culture	Warship	8	None
Dra'Azon	Returned	Any	9	Energy Form
Full Refund (Homomdan Convertcraft MBU)	Culture (ex-Involved)	Warship	8	GOU
Meatfucker	Culture	Ship	8	GCU
Inspiral, Coalescence, Ringdown	Involved	Ship	8	Great Ship (So Much For Subtlety, Population (>1 million))
The Mortharvelt Nestworld	Involved	Hub	8	Megastructure, pop (~ trillion)
Masaq' Orbital	Culture	Warship	8	Orbital, Population
Smile Tolerantly	Involved (ex-Culture)	Ship	8	GCU
Falling Outside The Normal Moral Constraints	Culture	Warship	8	I Said, I've Got A Big Stick
Unfallen Bulbitian	Remnant	Hub	8	Structure, Contained Singularity
Fallen Bulbitian	Remnant	Hub	8	Structure (on planet)
Zoologist	Returned	Mind	8	None
IIn Shellworld Destroyer	Remnant	Warship	8	Minimal Chassis